

THE SMITHFIELD TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING  
MARCH 13, 2024

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A Regular Business Meeting of the Smithfield Township Board of Supervisors was held on March 13, 2024, at the Smithfield Township Municipal Center at 1155 Red Fox Rd, East Stroudsburg, PA 18301, and via Zoom.

Present are Supervisors Jacob Pride, Robert Lovenheim, and Michael Albert, Solicitor Ronold Karasek, Engineer Jon Tresslar, Administrative Coordinator Dyana Salvi, and Township Manager Julia Heilakka.

Also present are Laura Pride, Vicky Ozgun, Pam Barrett, Robert Tortoriello, Tammy Booth, Pete Begley, Scott Valentine, and Kristine Karol.

Chair Jacob Pride calls the meeting to order at 6:05PM. A quorum is present.

1. The Pledge of Allegiance is recited.

2. Minutes

Robert Lovenheim motions to approve the minutes from the February 28, 2024, regular meeting, Michael Albert seconds. Michael Albert requests a change in the minutes, regarding thoughts on a gravel road. Vote: all in favor; minutes accepted.

3. Announcements

- a. The Board held an Executive Session on March 13, 2024, from 5:40PM to 6:02PM regarding personnel and legal matters.
- b. The Rename the Creek Campaign comments are due to Alex Jackson at [alex@smithfieldtownship.com](mailto:alex@smithfieldtownship.com) by March 15, 2024.

4. Bills & Obligations

- a. Consider: 3/13/2024- General Fund: \$79,929.96- Escrow Fund: \$0.

Robert Lovenheim motions to approve the bills, Michael Albert Seconds. Michael Albert clarifies the treasures office bill for postage. No Public comment. Vote: all in favor; motion carries.

5. Reports

- a. Solicitor's Report- Ronold Karasek states that the Mountain Manor Holdings Motorcross Track hearing was open for public comment during the Zoning Hearing Board meeting on March 5, 2024. This meeting, along with the current continuation of the Healthy

Minds Conditional use hearing, required advanced preparation. He also worked on the draft road safety ordinance and the Franklin Hill Land Development Plan. Michael Albert references the Zoning Hearing Board and clarifies the timeframe for a brief. Ronold Karasek responds that once all transcripts are received from the hearing, there is a three-week period to file legal briefs.

b. Engineer's Report- Jon Tresslar states he has no report.

## 6. Consent Agenda

a. Consider: Appoint T & M Associates as Township Engineers.

b. Consider: Ratification of Advertisement of Environmental Advisory Council Meetings.

c. Consider: Approve Strauser Maintenance Contract 2024.

Robert Lovenheim motions to approve the consent agenda, Michael Albert seconds. Michael Albert clarifies the number of contracts relating to Strauser Maintenance. Jacob Pride clarifies current rates. Michael Albert notes the current change in Township Engineers. No public comment. Vote: all in favor; motion carries.

## 7. Old Business

a. Public Hearing Continuation of Healthy Minds Treatment Center Conditional Use Application. The public hearing begins at 6:14PM. [This hearing is transcribed by Donna Kenderdine, LLC]. Jacob Pride motions to pause the hearing at 7:05PM; the hearing will be continued on March 27<sup>th</sup> at 6:00PM.

b. Consider: Formation of Smithfield Township Economic Development Committee. Michael Albert motions to table the Economic Development Committee, stating that he has yet to meet with Middle Smithfield Township. Robert Lovenheim seconds. Vote: all in favor; item tabled.

## 8. Discuss: New Business:

a. Discuss: Objectives for March 20, 2024, Zoning Work Session. There will be a joint work session between the Board of Supervisors and the Planning Commission on March 20, 2024, at 4:00PM. There will be discussion of defining zoning codes.

## 9. Public Comment

a. Pam Barrett states her dislike of the newly instituted tax bill and the current Supervisors.

b. Vicky Ozgun confirms that the joint work session is open to the public.

- c. Robert Tortoriello asks for an update on the noise ordinance. Michael Albert references the app NIOSH- Sound Level Meter. Julia Heilakka states that the Township has submitted the ordinance and is pending feedback from the county. Jacob Pride visited the property. Robert Tortoriello asks for the Zoning Officer to come out and investigate. Robert Lovenheim states that Ken Wolfe is planning to investigate the property in the coming week. The Department of Environmental Protection and the Conservation District have been notified.
- d. Tammy Booth asks for the Townships procedure regarding the sound ordinance. Jacob Pride states it will need approval from the Supervisors after seven days of advertisement. The sound ordinance will be brought to the Board for approval on April 10, 2024.
- e. Pete Begley references the Township Supervisors Handbook, and states public comment should commence after the Pledge of Allegiance. Jacob Pride clarifies that a second-class township code allows for flexibility when creating the meeting structure. Public comment is asked for during each vote, and there is a section for public comment relating to non-agenda items. Pete Begley asks for the pay rate of the supervisors. Jacob Pride states there is stipend of \$2,500 dollars a year set by the second-class township code. There is a rate of \$26.00 an hour for additional appointed work, with a limit of 20 hours per week. Pete Begley asks about Supervisor raises and previous rates. Jacob Pride clarifies rates are set by the Board of Auditors, and there was a leveling of pay between the supervisors.
- f. Scott Valentine questions the need for raising taxes. Jacob Pride replies with a list of in-house repairs needed to improve the quality of the Township. Scott Valentine then references the Monroe County Hotel Room Rental Excise Tax, and questions if this would help to offset the tax increase. Jacob Pride replies the Township has no jurisdiction on this tax; the percentage was set by the county and would need a significant increase to help offset the cost. The Monroe County Hotel Room Rental Excise Tax currently goes to the Visitor's Bureau, which may have an impact on cost distribution.

Michael Albert clarifies that the current tax rates have been passed for the year, the next budget meeting occurs in October. Jacob Pride states Monroe County Hotel Room Rental Excise Tax is under the authority of the Monroe County Commissioners. Scott Valentine asks the Board if they would consider working with the County Commissioners to offset the tax if provided with more information. Jacob Pride replies that if the amount could offset the costs yearly then it would be considerable.

- g. Tammy Booth suggests changing the time of budget meetings to after work hours. Jacob Pride states that this is something that will be considered, and there is a zoom link for those who are unable to attend.
- h. Pam Barrett states Jacob Pride does not care about taxes because he does not pay them.

- i. Laura Pride states her son Jacob Pride lives in a multigenerational home owned by her husband and herself. Her husband is a disabled veteran. In the state of Pennsylvania disabled veterans are entitled to an exemption of property tax. No one should insult disabled veterans.
- j. Pete Begley questions if anything was cut within the budget before raising taxes. Jacob Pride states that this increase was necessary to make investments in needed equipment.
- k. Vicky Ozgun questions how the money from the new tax bill will be distributed between the EMS. Michael Albert states that the Township has authority over how the money is distributed; the Board has not yet made a formal decision. He references an EMS joint session that occurred earlier in the day. This meeting had discussion among the neighboring townships to address distribution methods, mostly relating to population and geography. One favorable outcome is to look at the assessed value of land. While this method is favorable, it may be time consuming to implement. The next EMS meeting is scheduled for the first Wednesday in April for further discussion.

Vicky Ozgun questions if the Township is still receiving cable tax, and if the funds are continuing to be used towards EMS. Jacob Pride states the Township receives these funds in the General Fund, although the rates have been dwindling. There has been a decrease in cable use, and an increase in streaming services. Neighboring townships have removed the tax altogether.

Vicky Ozgun questions if EMS companies will stop asking the Board for donations. Michael Albert states that although the new tax bill has been released, the companies have the right to continue asking for donations.

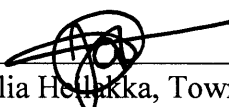
- l. Kristine Karol discusses Ordinance No. 187, which calls for the Zoning Officer to provide a monthly report to the Board of Supervisors and the Zoning Hearing Board. Jacob Pride agrees that this will be taking place.

10. Robert Lovenheim motions to adjourn, Jacob Pride seconds; meeting adjourned at 7:42PM.

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Minutes recorded by Dyana Salvi

Respectfully submitted:

  
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Julia Heikkala, Township Secretary